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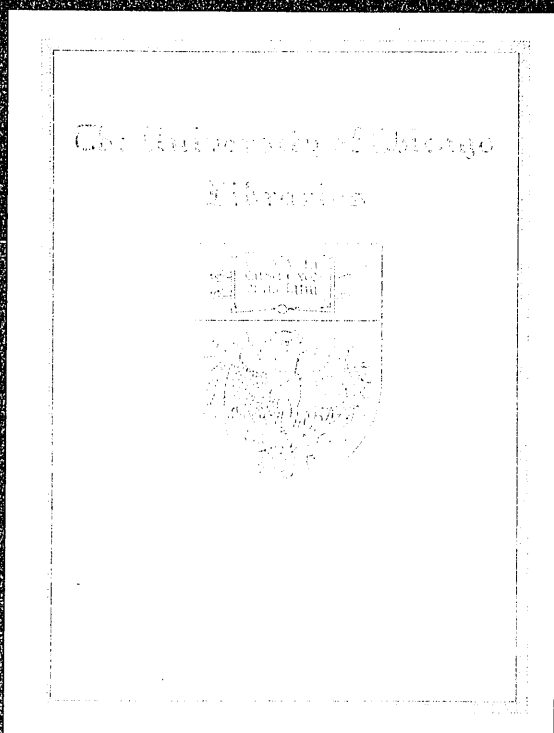
James RENDEL HARRIS

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EUCCHARISTIC ORIGINS.

By RENDEL HARRIS.

INTRODUCTION.

THIS little book is an attempt to find out, by the methods proper to scientific research, the original form of the Christian Eucharist ; for it is becoming more and more evident that we do not yet know accurately why Christian people are expected to celebrate the death of their Founder by means of bread and wine. Our records are still too remote from the events to inspire confidence in them as final statements ; the Gospel of Mark, for instance, which is our earliest record, must be a quarter of a century after the crucifixion, and the first epistle to the Corinthians is still later ;¹ even if we argue from the Eucharistic

¹ The difficulty with which we start is stated as follows in G. G. Colton, *Five Centuries of Religion*, p. 101 :—

‘The complete absence of Christian records for at least twenty years after the Crucifixion, and the fragmentary nature of our documents for the first two centuries, while they leave ample room for theological speculation, render it impossible for the historian to pronounce confidently upon the earliest conception of the Last Supper. It is often maintained that oral traditions were handed down, during those generations, with an accuracy beyond that of the written word ; but those who maintain this theory make no attempt to explain the divergence of our records on such a crucial point as the actual words which Christ pronounced in instituting this rite : some thirty vocables were spoken to His twelve nearest disciples at a moment which all felt to be of overwhelming importance ; four of our earliest documents profess to report what Christ said, yet only six words out of thirty are common to all four accounts.’

One may lawfully wish that this had been expressed somewhat more lucidly by the author of this fascinating and epoch-making book. What are the six words to which he refers : are they the Greek equivalent of ‘Take, eat : this is my body’ ? But why should the Fourth Gospel be quoted for any words of institution, or indeed for the institution of the Eucharist at all ? (or was he referring to 1st Corinthians ?) There is also the risk of a serious fallacy if we assume that the words in which a group of writers agree are primitive, and none of those in which they disagree historical.

accounts in these documents, and say that St. Mark gives the tradition of St. Peter, and that the Corinthian epistle is the evidence of St. Paul, we shall find ourselves at once in difficulties from the fact that St. Paul admits that he had no written tradition on the subject, but based his statements upon direct inspiration, saying to his disciples that he received his account of what happened from the Lord Himself ; and on the other hand, the theory of the Markan dependence upon St. Peter is still too uncertain for us to be able to make it the corner stone in a history of Eucharistic origins. The Christian reader is still further perplexed by finding that Luke, who usually follows the leadership of Mark, has had his text discoloured by infiltrations from the epistle to the Corinthians ; they may be primary and due to Luke himself, or we may, perhaps, be able to remove them, by editorial skill, as additions made to his text by a later hand than his own ; but we cannot avoid a sense of surprise that there should be any divergence at all in the report of what constitutes the chief Christian Mystery. Others will point out to us, that if we succeed in simplifying the Lucan account we shall have carried away along with the supposed added matter the very words of Institution ('Do this in remembrance of me'), which will now have disappeared from the Evangelical tradition. For it is well known that 'Do this in remembrance of me' is not a part of either the Markan tradition or of that in the Fourth Gospel. The difficulty may, no doubt, be alleviated either by saying that the evidence of St. Paul, speaking or writing under direct inspiration, is sufficient for simple believers like ourselves, who are more concerned to gather the fruits of our faith than to dig about the roots of it ; or by saying that in these matters the evidence of the unbroken practice of the Church is more potent than that of the Gospels themselves, and that in the continuity of its worship the Church is itself the Gospel. These considerations, however, will not deter the person of thoughtful mind from further enquiry ; he will still ask what St. Paul meant by receiving the tradition of the Last Supper

One can see the whole Gospel reduced to a series of shreds by that process. However, setting aside these objections, and making an appeal for a re-statement as to the 'six words . . . common to all four accounts,' we may agree with the writer that, in such a central passage as the Institution of the Eucharist, it is surprising that there should be so little consonance in the evangelical tradition.

direct from the Lord ; he will still want to know whether the evidence of the Church is constant or consistent, and will soon find out that, at any rate, it shows surprising variations of its own from the Evangelical tradition, which again provokes the question as to what it was that really happened, which the Church repeats in its highest offices, and insists upon as genuine and necessary Christianity. The enquiry is, as in so many other instances, forced upon us by the discordance of the traditions ; it cannot be evaded, and it should therefore be welcomed. It is further complicated by the fact that the Christian religion is no longer held, by thoughtful people, to be in complete detachment from surrounding religions ; in particular, it has been thought to have undergone influence from the Greek or Pagan Mysteries, and there has been great debate as to whether this influence is so small as to be practically negligible, or whether it is so great as to be a factor of historical importance, operating at the very centre of the Christian tradition. Does one go to Rome, or to Constantinople, by way of Eleusis ? Or does one start from Eleusis to go to Jerusalem ? Is the portrait of Jesus in the Catacombs, the eucharistic portrait, in any relation to that of Dionysos ? We may put the question in a striking manner by a personal experience. I was one day watching, at an inn in an Italian village, a couple of peasants engaged in a game of cards : one of them, in the course of the game, laid on the table a card with the remark 'Corpo di Bacco,' and was promptly countered by another card, with the observation 'Corpo di Jesu.' That simple experience brought up the past in a flash ; for Bacchus also had a broken and commemorated body. Was there any relation between the Christian ritual and the Dionysiac ritual ? One remembers that the Syrian domination over Palestine had been signalled in the pre-Maccabean times by the introduction of the Cult of Dionysos, and that, not far off, at Alexandria the worshippers had been branded as well as decorated with the ivy-leaf of the god, and does not Plutarch tell us in his *Roman Questions* of the women-worshippers who chewed the 'ivy-god' ? So there was one god, in pre-Christian times, whose cult-symbol was made the basis of a communion. Did Dionysos pass away like a bad dream from the Jewish history ? He did not so pass from the Greek cities in which Judaism and Christianity carried on their competing propaganda. Then we are bound to ask questions as to the action of one cult on another, even if the comparison of the

cults one with the other should include Christian features which we would rather have imagined to be altogether out of reach of pagan parallelism.

But before competition can be calculated, there must be something to compete with, and before Greek or other mysteries can operate, there must be something to operate upon. So we are driven back again to the historical nucleus from which Christian worship proceeded.

Quite recently, in the discussion of the original title of St. Mark's Gospel, we ventured the opinion that it imitated Xenophon's *Memorabilia* and was something like the form *Memorabilia*, i.e. *from the Sayings and Doings of Jesus*. The case of the Last Supper is one of such *memorabilia*, and what we really want to know is, what Jesus said and what Jesus did on that occasion. That is what the Gospels have been trying to tell us in story, and what the rituals have been trying to tell us in symbol. We can hardly expect to make much historical progress until we know something more of the point of departure, both of legend and of ritual. To find that primitive form is the object of the present tract.

We must not be deterred from our enquiry by the suggestion which has been made by previous investigators that the problem is insoluble. Bousset, for instance, tells us that 'in the present state of our knowledge, *we shall unfortunately be obliged to give up all hope of ascertaining the original meaning of the Last Supper*. . . . A justifiable and widespread doubt has been raised in recent times as to whether that solemn action of Jesus at his last meal with the disciples had anything directly to do with the thought of his death.'¹ We have italicised the passage which we hope to be able to contradict in the following pages.

CHAPTER I.

Of Sacraments in General.

We may begin our enquiry, and clear our minds as to what we really want to know, by some observations upon the nature of sacraments in general. The Christian Church recognises a certain number of sacraments, say two, if you please, or seven, if you prefer it; but the folk-lorist and the anthropologist will tell us that seventy-times-

¹ Bousset, *Jesus*, Eng. tr., p. 206.

seven would be an insufficient number. The history of mankind (including the history of the Church) is full of customs and recurrent practices which are in singular parallelism with what we commonly call Sacraments, full, that is, of actions performed with an ulterior meaning and intention. For our purpose, in the present enquiry, we may find a sufficient definition of sacraments as 'an action performed on one plane to represent or to cause a corresponding action upon another plane.' Let us take a simple instance.

One of the primary needs of man over a large part of the surface of the earth is a sufficient supply of rain : in order to secure this he must have machinery ; he cannot, in his early days at least, send up a balloon filled with explosive gas, and provoke at once a rain-storm and the observation that

‘ They are making rain in Texas,
With never a word of prayer ; ’

✓ We must have the word of prayer, and say ‘ Zeus rain ! ’ or ‘ Attis rain ! ’ ; but that is not sufficient ; the priest or medicine man must show Zeus how to do it, by symbolic action, say by robing himself in black to denote the sky covered with clouds, or by mimicking the thunder, or by letting water fall from a perforated vessel. All such actions are sacramental. They are performed on the earth-plane to provoke sympathetic action on the sky-plane. They show the weather-god what is wanted. Quite a number of rain-charms might be catalogued, and every one of them would, according to our definition, be a sacrament.

In the same way, the mysteries of the corn-field, about which so much has been written in recent years, the reaping of the last sheaf, its reinforcement by the blood of man or beast, its conservation from the harvest to the seed time constitute one of the chief sacraments of the human race. The number of charms for fertility is almost boundless. They constitute the irrational rationality of the human race, absurd oftentimes in themselves, but not absurd in the mind of the first agriculturist, who wants one harvest to replace and follow another, and if possible to make two grains grow where one grew before. His processes are all mysterious, his actions are all religious ; if he had found out that a shovelful of nitrate of soda would produce the right result, the chances are that nitrate of soda would have been deified.

Quite recently I wrote a book on the surviving, but rapidly disappearing practices in our apple-orchards. It was shown that, at a certain time in the winter, the apple-trees were sacramentally medicined with a view to the next year's crop. The farmer and his folk went into the orchard at night, with a vessel filled with hot cider, in which roasted apples and toast were floating. This cider and apples were regarded as the liquid and solid substance of the tree, by which the tree was to be reinforced. A small boy was mounted into the fork of the tree ; he was to pretend to be the tree-spirit, and his business was to eat and drink apple for the apple-tree. The surrounding rustics having supplied him with his portion, and medicined the roots of the tree, the remainder was consumed by those present, with various accompaniments of noise and song and symbolic action. It would be difficult to find a more perfect illustration of a ritual for fertility. It can be translated easily into definitely religious language. In fact, if Christianity had originated at Glastonbury, in the isle of Avalon (or Apples), its symbols would have been bread and apples and cider, and not bread and wine. So we cannot be wrong in saying that a primitive sacrament still lingers in our orchards.

We attempted to show that it was out of such a ritual as this of the apple-orchards that the cult of the great god Apollo arose, and that his very name reproduced his origin. This is not the place to repeat the arguments which reinforced the attempted solution of a great mythological problem. We were as well aware as our critics of the danger of finding a key to all mythologies or to any. Our reason for referring to the matter is this, that we were engaged upon a scientific enquiry as to whether Apollo was derived from a previous vegetable cult ; and in the case alluded to, the personification of the apple-tree is nearly the last stage in the evolution of the cult ; the worship of Apollo, as known to the Greeks, had an earlier impersonal ancestry, so we must bear in mind the possibility that even Christian sacraments may have pre-Christian origins ; they may be, either wholly or in part, prehistoric. That was one of the things we learnt from the Devonshire rustics. A sacrament of Grace need not be wholly detached in its evolution from a sacrament of Nature. The Christian sacraments may be wholly, or in part, pre-Christian.

Let us now turn to another sacrament which is more definitely religious in its character. The great sacrament of the Aryan race is the

'brewing of Soma,' the drink of the gods, of which whosoever drinks with the gods and under the direction of the gods, will, like them, become immortal, while they on their part will, as a consequence of the same draught, remain immortal and be reinforced in their everlastingness. What then is the drink Soma? It must be something of central religious importance, when we find one whole book of the Rig-Veda occupied with hymns in its honour. Yet it was, in the first instance, only the juice of a plant, either intoxicant in itself, or mixed with intoxicants when it was drunk. From its intoxicating effects it came to be regarded as a god, and to be numbered with the gods; its origin, however, was forgotten, and, in consequence, in the later Vedic literature the theory was started that Soma was the moon. In reality it was the juice of a plant of the ivy family, for which in modern times the Brahmans have found a necessary substitute, the original plant being no longer within reach. The migrant Aryans left it behind in their ancient Asiatic home, perhaps in Cashmere. Since we find the ivy divinised in Greece as Bacchos-Dionysos (for Dionysos was an ivy-god before he was a vine-god), we may infer that the Soma of the Vedas, which is also the Haoma of the Zend-Avesta, is the same thing as the Nectar of the Greek gods. Nectar, also, is a drink which confers and sustains immortal life. We shall probably be safe in our philology, if we explain the first syllable of nec-tar as meaning death (cf. the Greek νέκυς, nekūs) and the second syllable as connected with the Greek τέλλω, teirō, to wear away, to destroy; the Nectar or Soma is the death-destroyer; its religious use is, then, inevitable: it is in Keats' language,

'An endless fountain of immortal drink,
Pouring unto us from the heaven's brink.'

Nor need we be surprised if it should turn out that this immortal drink flowed upward at the first before it flowed down. It was brewed down here before it was given from up there. The eagle of Zeus carried it heavenward, as in Greek legend, before he brought it earthward as in Vedic thought. The main point to be remembered is that, for all our race, *the drink means immortality*; it makes us like the blessed gods.¹ The discovery of this intoxicant is, therefore, an epoch

¹ This is why Ganymedes and the nectar-cup are represented on Greek sarcophagi; see, for instance, the one which I have figured from Visconti

in human history ; the finding of the fire-water, even in a moderate percentage of alcohol, was as momentous as the finding of fire itself. The Greek Mysteries take place, in the first instance, as Greek drinking-festivals. Then later the club, formed by the initiates, will assert itself against the drink ; the democracy of the new draught will disappear ; the god-intoxicated mystics will become a caste ; the Aryan in the street will no longer make nor drink the beverage : it will come under the rule, ' For the priests only ' and ' By the priests only : ' in the beginning it appears to have been more widely diffused and more commonly enjoyed. The religious experience becomes transferred from the many to the few ; one must not over-populate the upper atmospheres ! Gods there ; Brahmans here : but not too many of them.

The great Aryan sacrament is older than the discovery of the vine. The first Bacchæ in Greek lands were ivy-chewers or ivy-drinkers, in association with a fermented honey-drink, which we also find employed in the consecration of the Soma. For Græco-Roman peoples, the Soma-plant is replaced by the vine ; for northern peoples Soma is probably the juice of the apple. Around each of the plants referred to we have the atmosphere proper to the development of a cult, we find in them the materials suited to produce sacramental customs. We do not, however, doubt that for the Indo-Germanic peoples, the original medicine which makes man immortal is the juice of the Soma-plant. Those who partook of it said to one another,

' We have drunk Soma, we have become immortal,
We have pressed through to the light, we have found the gods.'¹

They reproduced on the lower plane what they thought went on above. It is clear that Christianity when making its invasion of Indo-germanic peoples would find itself not the first interpreter of mystic sacraments. If Greek or Pagan mysteries are to operate on Christian mysteries, there need be, initially, no deep gulf between them.

in *Origin and Meaning of Apple-Cults*, where the dying person appeals for the draught which Ganymedes is supplying to the Eagle. The Christian parallel is obvious.

¹ Rig-Veda, viii., 48, 3.

SUPPLEMENTARY NOTE.

On a Curious Parallel to the Soma-cult.

It is extremely difficult for the person who is not acquainted by actual study with the history of religions to understand how a plant can become deified on account of the peculiar medical or intoxicating effects which it is supposed to possess. We may read in the Vedic literature page after page of the virtues of the Soma plant and the way in which it affects both gods and men, and becomes itself an object of divine worship, but since the plant itself is unknown, and only represented in the present day by a substitute, we have no means of observing experimentally the potencies which the Aryans attached to the original plant and its juices.

To some extent the same thing is true of the worship of Dionysos ; we know that the vine is his accredited symbol, and it is suspected that this is itself a substitute for an original ivy-plant, which may be not very remote from the Aryan Soma. But how to make the equation between Dionysos = Vine = Ivy = Soma is a problem that comparative religion has not succeeded in solving : so that it is perhaps pardonable if people are sceptical even as to the last stage of the equation and will not even believe that Dionysos is a deified vine, or at least the juice of a divine plant.

It will be much easier to understand the processes by which the sacramental plant attained its dignity, if we observe an actual evolution of a similar cult that is going on under our eyes at the present time. Suppose we turn to a volume recently published on *The Red Man in the United States*.¹

We find that the Indian Race is threatened with serious physical and moral disaster in consequence of the use of a drug called *Mescal* or *Peyote*.

'Peyote is a species of cactus grown in Northern Mexico. The top, about one and a half inches in diameter, very soft and green, is cut off and dried. From time immemorial peyote has been used by certain tribes in Mexico for the purpose of producing intoxication at religious ceremonies. . . . In late years it has gradually spread to an alarming extent among many of the tribes of the United States.'

¹ Published under the direction of G. E. E. Lindquist by the Doran Co., New York.

Now let us see what form this semi-religious intoxication takes ; here is an extract which bears on the subject :—

‘To-day there is a new, semi-religious movement among thousands of Indians which exalts peyote into a fetish to be worshipped as something extraordinary and supernatural. Meetings are generally held every Saturday night, and last all night long. The drug is passed in dry form, or as a tea. . . . Gradually, after midnight, many present become intoxicated, enjoying the incessant and wonderful visions and music.’

Now notice how Peyote has touched celestial rank :—

‘In many tribes it is now spoken of as the Holy Spirit, the “Comforter” that Jesus sent. . . . Peyote eaters say : “It tells us how to be saved. Peyote prays for us when we are sick and forgives our sins. Peyote is the Way, the Truth and the Life of every Indian that eats it.”’

The value of this story of the plant in process of deification is not limited to the parallel that it furnishes to Soma-cult or Dionysos-cult ; we actually see before us the influence of an older religion in the process of incubation of a newer faith and practice. This is precisely what is so difficult in the case of the genesis of the Christian Religion ; critics advise us that there has been an infiltration from the Mystery Religions of the East into nascent Christianity, and that the new ritual has incorporated elements from older cults : but it is very difficult to visualise the process. The study of Peyote as a new religion supplies us with a striking parallel case of the way in which a new cult absorbs the very language and ritual of forms of worship that have preceded. Peyote, then, is a kind of modern Soma, and the Indians of the West are following in the steps of the Aryans of the East.

CHAPTER II.

Eucharistic History.

Now let us come to the subject which we have proposed to ourselves for investigation, the history of the Christian Eucharist. We stated in our introductory observations, that the traditional history is in some confusion, and that it is probable that we have not before us

that tradition in its earliest form. Suppose we look into the documents somewhat more closely, at the risk of repeating what is matter of general knowledge among scholars, and, of course, making no artificial distinction between documents which are considered canonical and inspired, and documents uncanonical and non-authoritative.

We will begin with the account in the Gospel of Luke. The story of the Last Supper in the twenty-second chapter of Luke is marked by the following peculiarities : it begins by the pouring of wine into a cup, so that the pouring of wine is made to have precedence over the breaking of bread ; but this apparent reversal of the order which we find in Mark is compensated for by the introduction of the second cup after the Supper, so that in the ordinary texts of the Lucan Gospel we have a duplicated cup. If the texts were correctly edited, we should find ourselves in the same position as a critic does, who observes an annotation or a reading inserted at two different points, and who promptly disowns both the insertions as having come, as homeless wanderers, from the margin of his book. But this will not do in the present case ; for the textual critic finds that it is not a case of a double insertion ; the second of the repeated incidents turns out not to be a part of the Gospel at all, in the sense that the first of the incidents was. It is a later addition. It was Hort's service to textual criticism that, finding a number of passages in the closing chapters of Luke, to be wanting in the oldest Latin MSS., he courageously shut them up in double brackets as not being a part of the primitive text : a little more courage would have relegated them to the notes or to an appendix. Among the passages so excised, we have to remove Luke xxii. 19 from the words ' which is given for you ' to Luke xxii. 20 ' which is shed for you,' in both cases the words here quoted being part of the omission. This leaves us with what looks at first sight, like a truncated and reversed Eucharist ; truncated, in that it has lost its second cup ; reversed, in that it has given the bread of the Eucharist the second place instead of the first. When, however, we examine the excised matter (which, as we have said, contains the words of institution, ' Do this in remembrance of me ') we find that it is very nearly *verbatim* the language of the first epistle to the Corinthians ; see 1 Cor. xi. 23-25 (' I received of the Lord . . . in remembrance of me. ').

For convenience of reference, here are the parallel passages :—

1 Cor. xi. 23, 25.

Luke xxii. 19, 20.

The Lord Jesus took bread, and when He had given thanks, brake it and said : This is my body, which is [? broken] for you ; do this in remembrance of me. Likewise also the cup after supper, saying : This cup is the New Covenant in my blood ; do this, as often as ye drink it, in remembrance of me.

And He took bread and when He had given thanks, brake it and said : This is my body, which is given for you ; do this in remembrance of me. And the cup likewise after supping, saying : This cup is the New Covenant in my blood, which is shed for you.

Thus the second cup in Luke has been borrowed from the epistle to the Corinthians, where it is not a second cup at all, but where everything is in the normal eucharistic order. If, then, Luke has what appears to be a truncated Eucharist, it is not really truncated ; it is merely reversed, and the reversal is subsequently compensated for. Nor have we really lost anything, for what is removed from Luke has been found in Corinthians, that is to say, in an earlier book by a more responsible authority. This earlier authority moves *pari passu* in his narration with the Gospel of Mark.

If we set Luke on one side, at least as regards the accretions to his text, we have not acquired the right to ignore his residual text. It may be granted that what is left presents us with an abnormal Eucharistic order, as compared with St. Mark and St. Paul, but it is not to be dismissed as an arbitrary change on Luke's part : for when we turn to the *Teaching of the Apostles*, we find the very same reversal of order, 'First of all, concerning the cup, etc.' ; so that in the matter of the order and sequence of the Eucharist we have Luke and the Didaché on one side, and Mark with Paul on the other.¹

¹ I do not turn aside to defend the authenticity or prove the antiquity of the *Teaching of the Apostles*. Those who are interested to watch the straits to which men are reduced who wish to make this great document late and fictitious, may read Dr. Armitage Robinson on the subject. They will find, *inter alia*, that the reason for the transfer of tithes and first-fruits from the earlier priesthood to the newer order of prophets ('for they are your high-priests'), is due to the fact that the forger (!) of the *Teaching* has been reading the Fourth Gospel, in which he found that Caiaphas, the high priest *pro tem.*, was also a prophet for an occasion, when he spoke of Jesus' death ; but if a high-priest can be a prophet, it follows by logical processes that every prophet of the Christian order has replaced a high priest. Hence the language of the *Teaching*. I cannot believe that the writer who has

Even here we have to be on our guard not to be too certain that Paul agrees with Mark ; for in 1 Cor. x. 16 he has the order of Luke and the Didaché, and says, 'The cup which we bless . . . the bread which we break.'

Our next duty is clearly that of trying to find out which of the eucharistic sequences we have traced in early times is the earlier and the more authoritative. We know that the Church has abandoned the Lucan order, but that proves nothing. Why should two such distinct narrations come into existence ? Was one derived from the other ? If Paul was right in his narration, why should Luke, who was his *fidus Achates*, take a different line ?

For we have shown that the Lucan arrangement of the events is not arbitrary. Or is it possible that neither form is the primitive one ? We are now in serious perplexity, for we have no further textual authorities to which we can refer, so that we are reduced to the internal criticism of the existing and edited texts. Let us see if by a fresh hypothesis, or by a renewed comparison of the texts, we can resolve the riddle.

One thing all the three divergent authorities are agreed on is this, that Jesus took bread and brake it, and said *This is my body*. They are not all agreed that he said *This is my blood* over the cup of wine ; for now that Luke's text is shortened, these words do not appear ; on the other hand, all the authorities agree that he took a cup and that he gave thanks over it, very much as over the broken bread. Mark says that the disciples all drank of it : Luke that Jesus told them to share it among themselves, which is not very different. It will be seen that with the removal of the statement 'hic est sanguis meus,' so as to follow the shorter recension, we have now two associated statements, of which we cannot yet say which is first and which is second ; viz. :—

Jesus took a cup and gave thanks over it ;
Jesus took bread and gave thanks over it,
and said 'This is my body.'

We have set on one side certain oracular references to not eating or not drinking again till the Kingdom of God shall come ; they may given us this amazing syllogism can really have meant what he said. Ye these are his actual words : 'The very same passage [St. John xi. 51 f.] declares that the high priest by virtue of his office, spoke as a prophet : . . . if their high priests were prophets, the prophets are your high priests.'

have a primitive nucleus, but they do not affect the argument upon which we are engaged. How is it possible to connect the two statements to which we reduced the story? Did they come into the narrative side by side, or had one of them a historical precedence? Is it possible that the original eucharist was in a single species? We need not be startled at such a supposition, when we recall that for the Roman Catholic worshipper, who is not a priest, the bread is the sole sacrament; and that the Greek Church mixes the bread and wine together till they present the appearance of a single element, which is given to the worshipper in a spoon. Anything may turn out to be original when practices are so diverse.

Moreover, the hypothesis of a single species is attractive on its own account; the Gospels show clearly that the breaking of bread and its benediction was the ordinary habit of Jesus at meal-times, so that it is not a sacrament at all, and is only eucharistic in the primitive sense of thanksgiving.

The breaking of bread, therefore, is not properly a part of the ritual, if there be a ritual, and, if it were not for the associated oracular words, it would be easy to set it on one side or put it with the numerous similar occurrences in the Gospels. If the saying of grace is the eucharist, then the eucharist is not sacramental; if, however, the Eucharist has a sacramental meaning, the saying of grace must be separated from it, the bread has a secondary position in the narration of events, the ritual can go on without it.

When we turn to the early Patristic traditions, we find a certain preference assigned to the bread over the wine, which surprises us: for instance, in Ignatius' epistle to the Ephesians (c. 20) we find him speaking of the bread of the Eucharist as the medicine or elixir of immortality (*φάρμακον ἀθανασίας*), the antidote of death (*ἀντίδοτος τοῦ μὴ ἀποθανεῖν*). The passage is valuable on account of its repeated statement that immortality comes by way of the Eucharistic bread. We should, from pagan analogies, have expected that the liquid intoxicant would have been the medicine immortal and death's antidote. Is the bread really the medicine? We find something like it in a hymn ascribed to Ephrem Syrus, where we are told to

‘Eat the living body,
The medicine which makes all to live’:

—*Hymn. in fest. Epiph.* vii., 6.

Here the body of Christ is called, in Ignatian language, the *medicine of life*. Irenæus has the same doctrine of Eucharistic immortality, but without restricting it to one element : for in a passage over which there has been much dispute, he says that 'our bodies partaking of the Eucharist are no longer corruptible, they have the hope of the resurrection for ever.'¹ Even here the emphasis on our bodies, taken with the prevalent idea that 'His body is for our body,' raises the suspicion that Irenæus had the bread in mind when he wrote.

It can hardly be denied that in these early Patristic expressions we are coming very close to the language and thought of the Greek Mysteries, for here also the 'medicine' is to be found, and its immortal value. For instance, in the *Bacchæ* of Euripides, Dionysos is addressed as the 'medicine' (φάρμακον) for all our woes : (Eur. *Bacch.* 283). But this medicine is the 'moist draught of the cluster,' so that on the Bacchic side, the medicine is liquid and not solid.² Here again our imagination is stimulated to enquire whether the element that carries immortality ought not to be the cup.

Suppose, then, we replace the bread by the cup in our eucharistic formula, and say that the original was that 'Jesus took a cup and said *This is my body*.' It will at once be remarked that the analysis which we have suggested, according to which the Eucharist is in one species only, has landed us in an absurd statement. Even if we can divine the kind of correction to which such a statement would lead, we can hardly expect to establish eucharistic origin in linguistic absurdity.

But let us look into the matter more closely ; the word which we have translated 'body' is the Greek σῶμα (sōma) ; suppose we write it with a capital letter and do not translate it. Since *Soma* is the great Aryan Sacrament, and has come down even to our own times, we can, by reading it in the text without the change of a single letter, get rid of the absurdity of the equation between the 'cup' and the

¹ Iren. *C. Haer.* ix., xviii., 5.

² That the expression 'elixir of immortality, belongs to the Pagan mysteries may be seen from the account which Diodorus Siculus gives of the Cult of Isis ; he tells us that Isis was the discoverer of the medicine of immortality (φάρμακον ἀθανασίας) by means of which she restored to life her son Horus, and made him to partake of immortality. (Diod. i., 25.) But this does not tell us whether Isis discovered a solid or a liquid drug.

'body,' for there is no difficulty in the cup being a Soma cup. This, then, was what Jesus said and did :

He took a cup and said 'This is my Soma.'

What He meant was that the end was come and immortality was at hand. It was a mystical expression, an occult saying, if we like to put it so : a figure of speech expressing exactly the situation in which He found Himself, but not expressing it clearly to His companions : He appears to have invited the disciples to drink Soma with Him, i.e. to die with Him, and with Him to enter upon an immortal life. They did drink, but, as in so many other cases, they only understood in part. From that partial misunderstanding sprang, in a little while, the 'Hoc est corpus meum,' and the Mass.

The restoration of the original form shows us clearly two things : (i) that the doctrine of immortality was involved in the Eucharist from the start, for immortality is the characteristic accompaniment of the draught of the Soma ; (ii) we see that the influence of the Mysteries was natural, and almost inevitable ; since the formula from which we begin our sacramental history is based upon the ancient mysteries out of which the Hellenistic mysteries were also evolved. Dionysos is only the Soma-drink one degree further in evolution. It was natural, then, and as we have said, almost inevitable, that when Christianity moved into the Greek-speaking and Greek-thinking world, *it should take on a colour from these mysteries in which immortality was supposed to be conferred.* We can see now why, in the closing eucharistic prayer in the *Teaching of the Apostles* we have the expressions of thanksgiving for 'the knowledge and faith and *immortality* which thou hast made known to us through Jesus thy Servant . . . to us thou hast given *spiritual food and drink and eternal life* through thy Servant.'

CHAPTER III.

Some Objections to the Foregoing Analysis.

It need scarcely be said that the suggestions in the foregoing chapter for the simplification of the history of the Eucharist and for making it at once intelligible and reasonable, are open to a very damaging fire of objections.

It might be urged that, in the first place, there is no reason to suppose that the term *Soma* existed either in Greek or in Syriac, and that, therefore, it could not have occurred in the conversation at the Last Supper.

In the next place, it could not have formed part of our Lord's religious vocabulary, in view of the absence of overlapping between Judaism and Hellenic beliefs on the one hand, and between Judaism and Indo-Iranianism on the other.

It might further be objected that no final proof has yet been forthcoming of a dependence of Greek Bacchic rites upon Aryan origins, and that until such proof be produced, analogies between Greek and Indian cults must run the risk of developing into fallacies.

No doubt there are many points from which our hypothesis furnishes objective to an assailant, and we are far from thinking that a final statement can be made : but it is lawful to suggest that some of the possible objections result from our ignorance rather than from our knowledge. This ignorance is not merely a defect in the knowledge of historic cults, of this religion or of that ; it extends to the knowledge of historic persons, and, in particular, it affects the person of the Founder of the Christian Faith. It is assumed that He was so wholly a Jew that He never looked outside the limits of Judaism in religion nor transgressed its limits territorially, except for a few days, perhaps, in which He was eluding capture, which was likely to occur within those limits. Yet it is not universally admitted that we know where He was born, and, if He was brought up in Galilee, whether He spent the whole of His first thirty years within those limits. One does not need to surrender to Dr. Paul Haupt's challenge, when he claims Aryan ancestry for the Lord Jesus, but he has on his side good historical evidence that Galilee was not populated by a purely Semitic race. Tradition said that it had been occupied at one time in history by a deported population from Media, and in that case, the tenacity of religious practices might have planted the Soma ritual in Galilee itself. Apart from this possibility, the fact of the existence of Northern trade-routes makes it reasonably certain that India and Persia both found their way to the Mediterranean, and not necessarily by Antioch or by the Red Sea. The whole question of the points of contact of East and West in the first century of our era needs to be reconsidered.

But suppose we say that traffic and traders never came this way,

or if they came, gave no hint of the religion to which they belonged, there is always the possibility that, if Soma did not come to Jesus, Jesus went to Soma ; the possibility, that is to say, of His having been a traveller, a religious pilgrim, an inquisitive visitant to shrines or to peoples. This does not commit Him to a journey to Tibet, nor to intercourse with imaginary Mahatmas ; it only means that we have an almost complete blank for the first thirty years of his life ; half of this period might belong to history if we could pick up the missing threads and find the missing links. One such Eastern journey would explain the allusion to the Soma. The problem is not very different from that which arises when an acute observer (perhaps the victim of over-subtlety) suggests that there are traces of Buddhist influence in the text of the Gospels. Only there is this difference, that Buddhist influence is easier to believe in than an exported Brahmanism, for Buddhism is essentially missionary in its outlook, like Christianity itself, and it flies East and West, North and South, with amazing rapidity.

It may, perhaps, be further objected that if Jesus had really been an Eastern or Southern traveller in the blank spaces of His life to which we have referred, He would have given some hint of it, as travellers commonly do, in His conversations with His disciples or with others. Does he ever say 'When I was in Antioch,' or 'I remember when I visited Alexandria' ? Could He have avoided saying such things ?

To which the answer is that the question is self-destructive ; there are many places within Palestine limits that He never tells of having visited ; He never speaks of Cesarea, *i.e.* the Mediterranean Cesarea, nor of Nazareth even, nor its neighbour Sepphoris.

Certainly we have no sufficient warrant for believing that Jesus, except on a single urgent occasion, was never outside Palestinian limits ; if he went outside territorially he went outside also intellectually. That is almost inevitable. We have, however, no evidence at all of His doings, for more than half His life.

It will, perhaps, be said that there is no need to send Jesus to India in search of the Soma draught. We have seen above that in the Syrian Church the Eucharist was known as the *Soma* or *medicine* (*φάρμακον*) of *life* : and we have also seen from Ignatius of Antioch that it was described in Greek language as *medicine of immortality*. The coincidence in the terms is so striking, that it is natural to suggest that there is something primitive about it.

The word *Sama* is not genuine Semitic ; it has been borrowed from some other language ; in meaning it answers almost exactly to the Greek *φάρμακον*, as we have suggested above. It is very common in Syriac and Aramaic and might easily have been used by our Lord. It would not, however, call up the Greek word for 'body' (*σῶμα*) quite as readily as the Indian word would do.

It is certainly curious that no trace of *Soma* has yet turned up in the Greek vocabularies. Perhaps this also is a part of our ignorance and means that we have never looked for it, or have looked in the wrong direction.

We have attempted to clear up the Eucharistic enigma by the use of criticism and by the introduction of a single conjecture. It must surely be correct that the 'breaking of bread' in the story is our Lord's normal custom and ought long ago to have been treated as such. As we have seen, the removal of the 'breaking of bread' from the story of the Last Supper, or the regarding it as a customary formality by which any meal is to be sanctified, reduces the two species of a Christian eucharist to a single species, and it is this single species that has to be accounted for. For this we made a single conjecture, viz. : that Jesus was speaking of the Indian, Avestan, Indo-Germanic *Soma*, when His disciples thought He was speaking of His *body*. That single conjecture explains the mystery and shows us how the parallel with the pagan Mysteries was invited from the start. It is not necessary to assume, though it seems probable, that Jesus had travelled Eastward at some time in His early life. The conjecture may find support without the added speculation. Let us leave that for further enquiry.

We have not been able to explain completely some of the remaining incidents in the *Last Supper*. The words of institution, though not in the text of the Synoptic Gospels nor in the Fourth Gospel, may be very nearly primitive. Nothing more natural nor more probable than that Jesus, now face to face with the close of His life's tragedy, should have said 'Remember me' ; and indeed, in that sense, the words of institution may still be valid, though they have ceased to be mysterious. But the exact words that He said, whether they were 'Do this in remembrance of me' or 'Drink this and remember me,' are probably out of the reach of our faculty of historical reconstruction. We may, however, be thankful that nothing of a sacerdotal character,

and nothing of a sacramental intention on His part is left to us, superposed on the simple memorial of the night in which He was betrayed. If the objection should be made that our explanation of *Soma* is impossible, in view of the prefixed λάβετε φάγετε ('take, eat') of St. Mark's gospel, we have only to reply that φάγετε (*eat*) has been added to the text of Mark at an early period; it stood first as 'take,' and later as 'take, eat, as the MSS. of the Gospel clearly show. The importance of this observation will be evident to all those who recognise the priority of Mark over the other synoptics.

There is a further objection to be met, that the identification of the Body (σῶμα) with the Aryan sacred drink (*Soma*), at the earliest period of Eucharistic evolution, almost requires us to believe that Jesus was speaking Greek at the Last Supper. It will be said that we have no evidence of a compulsory character for thus associating Greek with Aramaic, which is commonly supposed to be the Dominical speech, nor for giving Greek the preference over Aramaic. There are two ways of meeting this objection, which may commend themselves to those who do not think that a question is settled by asserting the defective state of our evidence.

If Jesus did not speak Greek at the Last Supper, St. Luke certainly represents him as doing so; our Lord, according to the Lucan account, addresses His disciples in words which, at the first glance, are convincingly Semitic language. He says: 'I should have greatly liked to eat this Passover with you before I suffer.' Here the opening ἐπιθυμία ἐπεθύμησα (commonly, but wrongly rendered as 'with desire I have desired') is a form of speech which is, at first sight, much more like the representation of an Aramaic sentence than of a Greek original. But when we look more closely at the sentence we see that Luke is making a Greek play upon words out of πάσχα (the *Passover* festival) and πάσχω (*I suffer*):—

τοῦτο τὸ πάσχα πρὸ τοῦ με παθεῖν
('this passover before I suffer').

It is impossible to escape from the play on words: whether it is primitive or not, is another question. At all events St. Luke is in evidence for it: he, at least, was thinking Greek and representing Jesus as talking Greek when he wrote his account of the Last Supper. We must not, therefore, infer Aramaism from the expression 'with desire I have desired.'

We can go a step further than this by the introduction of a second consideration. There has recently come to light the remarkable discovery that the words which Jesus used to Judas at the time of the actual Betrayal (Matt. xxvi. 50): *ἑταῖρε, ἐφ' ὃ πάρει*; 'Companion, what are you here for?' were a familiar legend on drinking glasses in the first century and in the East. Thus the speech of Jesus to Judas is history and not editorial fiction: the words were taken off the margin of the glass cup out of which they had drunk together. But this implies that Jesus addressed Judas in a Greek formula and not in Aramaic;¹ and it will follow that there is no obligation to believe that they talked in Aramaic at the Last Supper. The obligation, if any, is the other way. The glass cup and the Greek legend are historical.

The play upon *πάσχα* and *πάσχω* which Luke puts into the mouth of the Lord is certainly primitive. In the early Christian traditions it is common to make Moses responsible for it in the story of the Exodus. Thus Irenæus tells that 'Moses was not ignorant of the day of the *Passover* but figuratively foretold it, calling it by the name of *Pascha*; and on that very occasion which so long ago had been foretold by Moses, our Lord *suffered* in fulfilment of the *Passover*.'—Irenæus (ed. Mass. 239). The same popular Greek derivation is implied in Tertullian:—

"Moyses oracularly foretold that they were to eat the solemn feature of this day with bitter herbs; and he added the words 'It is the *Pascha* of the Lord,' i.e. the *Passion* of Christ."

—Tert. *adv. Jud.* 10.

The equation, then, between *Passover* and *Passion* is very early. No translator is necessarily involved in the words,

τοῦτό ἐστι τὸ σῶμά μου,

to which we have reduced the Christian liturgies.²

¹ The matter of the cups and the legend will be found discussed in the fourth edition of Deissmann's *Licht vom Osten*.

² The explanation of the word for *Passover* in terms of *Passion* does not appear to be from the writers of Hellenistic literature. Philo, for instance, who had every reason for suggesting Greek parallels or derivations, tells us that the *Passover* signifies that the created and perishable being has *passed over* to God: (*de sacr. Cain. et. Abel.*) Josephus also, writing to the Gentile world, explains that this festival we call *Pascha*, because on that day God *passed us over* and sent the plague upon the Egyptians; (*Antiq.* ii. 14, 6).

A Brief Note on the Two Species in the Eucharist.

A superficial study of the manner in which the Church presents the ritual of the Mass might lead to a hasty conclusion that two separate miracles were involved ; first, a miraculous creation of a bloodless Divine body ; second, a similar creation, with corresponding formula, of a bodiless Divine blood. Even to those persons who do not believe in any supernatural change in the elements, there is an air of repetition about the manner of making the commemoration, which has to be justified against the suspicion of mere re-iteration by the Biblical text (' Likewise also the cup after Supper, etc.').

It must not be assumed, however, that the Catholic priest creates the two species separately, and works two separate miracles at every Mass. The miracle is complete when '*Hoc est corpus meum*' is said ; the blood is already in the body, when the formula is complete. The worshipping layman really has both species ; and I suppose the Mass would be valid even if there were no separate consecration of wine. At all events this latter consecration is merely supplementary to what has already occurred ; it involves no second miracle. The Catholics will correct me, if I am wrong : most people, it need hardly be said, have not reflected upon the matter.

The next stage in the enquiry into which we have introduced our readers is even more important. We intend to give an almost exact Pagan illustration of the so-called *Institution of the Lord's Supper*, a parallel so vivid and so exact that it will be a solution of the problem, even if our foregoing analysis should be, in part at least, discredited. For we have thus far only indicated a possible point of departure for the Christian Mystery, and the indication of a point of departure is not a complete solution. In order to attain to something like an adequate solution, we propose to remove the enquiry into another quarter and to ask whether another (or even a closer) parallel than the Soma to the Christian ritual can be found in the religious history of man. As this investigation is better undertaken if we begin *de novo*, we will postpone it to a separate chapter, which shall be as far as possible, complete in itself, after we have added a few observations on the Christian Agapē.

CHAPTER IV.

Eucharist and Agapē.

Our analysis up to this point has been occupied with the traditional accounts of what passes under the name of the Eucharist, which accounts are the basis of all the existing liturgies. We must not, however, forget that the evidence for the practice of the early Church is not limited to this particular group of passages. We must not ignore the fact that the early Church had an Agapē, as well as a Eucharist. They may not be easy to define, as distinct one from the other ; we may not, at first hand, be able to say which has priority over the other, but we can be as sure of the primitive Agapē as we can of the primitive Eucharist ; we see the Agapē through the traditional cloud quite as evidently as we see the Eucharist ; it does not disappear when critical tests are applied, and what is for our purpose of great importance, it forms the bridge between early Christian life and the religious life of the world around, if it should be suspected that such a bridge existed. We can detect, among the ruins which Church history presents to us, the spring of the arch which may have carried the worshippers across from one temple to another. Viewed in this light, the Agapē is a pathetic survival ; it still exists in the Eastern Churches as a distribution of bread that has been blessed, a kind of Eucharist of the second order ; and it has been a natural instinct of religious reformers to restore it to the regular habit of the Church : John Wesley may be taken as an illustration of our statement. One hardly needed to be an antiquary to see that there must have been a love-feast of the Christian community ; something that would outdo in attraction the invitations to the banquets in the temple of Serapis, for instance ; in which the early believers might find a table of the Lord in place of the attractions and welcome of a table of devils. Such a table was not to be found in the official Eucharist. The early Christians wanted to sing and to talk and to be merry, as well as to rewrite history, just as the Greeks did in what they called *Syssitia* and *Symposia*. Their Agapē was something more frequent and more human than the annual Passover festival, though no doubt and of necessity, like the Passover, it had its own exclusiveness.

Well ! we see the Agapē, as we have said, through the mists of tradition, in stray allusions in the New Testament, in broad outlines in

the pictures of the Catacombs, but above all allusions and representations we have its equivalent in the ritual passages of the *Teaching of the Apostles*. Here we actually find Eucharist or Thank-meal described without any reference to Body and Blood, of the kind which the Christian centuries have perpetuated. It is time that the so-called Eucharistic passages in the *Teaching* were put back into their original place in the New Testament, if indeed the whole book, considered as a Christian summary of belief and practice, ought not to be recanonised. For, if the *Teaching* speaks of a Eucharist, it also speaks of a meal of which the Eucharist or Thanksgiving constitutes the opening and the close. "After you are filled," says the text, "give thanks as follows." It does not seem possible to escape from the implication, that the Agapē was the centre of the Eucharist and in that sense was the Eucharist. It was not a case of "Grace before meat," and "Grace after meat," and no meat between the graces. "After ye are filled" cannot possibly refer to the Eucharistic cup or a piece of bread. Just in proportion as this ritual is seen to be primitive, both in its doctrine of immortality, its view of the approaching end of all things, and, may we not add, in its overflowing happiness, it constitutes a further proof that the original custom of the Church was not that which has come down to us through the ages. Read the *Teaching* over again, and insert it in your *Acts of the Apostles*. It belongs there; bind up the *Teaching* with the *Acts*, and you will find yourself nearer to primitive Christianity than seemed, at first, to be possible. The shadows and mists of the first days of the Faith are beginning slowly to disperse. At this point, for convenience of reference, we reprint the section of the *Teaching* to which we have been referring. It runs thus:

As regards the Eucharist (Thank-meal) give thanks as follows:

First, for the cup:

We thank Thee, our Father, for the Holy Vine of David Thy servant, which Thou hast made known to us through Jesus, Thy servant: Thine be the glory for ever;

and for the broken bread:

We thank Thee, our Father, for the life and knowledge which Thou hast made known to us through Jesus Thy servant: Thine be the glory for ever. As this broken bread was scattered upon the mountains, and being gathered together became one, so let Thy Church be gathered together from the ends of the earth into

Thy kingdom ; for Thine is the glory and the power through Jesus Christ for ever.

(But let no one eat or drink of your Eucharist except those who have been baptized into the name of the Lord, for respecting this the Lord has said, Give not that which is holy to dogs.)

And after being filled, give thanks in this manner :

We thank Thee, O Holy Father, for Thy Holy name, which Thou hast made to dwell in our hearts, and for the knowledge, and faith and immortality which Thou hast made known to us through Jesus Thy Servant. Thine be the glory for ever. Thou, Almighty Master, didst create all things for the sake of Thy Name, and gavest to men both food and drink for enjoyment, that they may give thanks to Thee. Before all things we thank Thee that Thou are mighty. Thine be the glory for ever. Remember, O Lord, Thy church to deliver it from every evil, and to make it perfect in Thy love, and do Thou gather it together from the four winds, sanctified for Thy kingdom, which Thou hast prepared for it ; for Thine is the power and the glory for ever. Let grace come and let this world pass away. Hosanna to the God of David. (If anyone is holy, let him come ; if anyone is not, let him repent.) Maranatha, Amen.

(But permit the prophets to give thanks as much as they wish.)

In this primitive document we are probably nearer to the genesis of Christian thought and practice than even in the text of the Gospel : but even this document is not in its first form ; witness the misinterpretation of the saying of Jesus about keeping holy things for holy people and for holy occasions.

CHAPTER V.

The Oldest Eucharist.

In the foregoing discussion of the origins of the Christian Eucharist, which for a great number of people means the origin of Christianity itself, we pointed out that the evidence for the establishment of the chief sacramental rite of the Church was defective in quantity and unsatisfactory in quality ; the very first attempt at a critical examination of the evangelical testimonies required a diminution in our estimate of

what could be recognised as first-hand evidence, and revealed internal divergencies on the part of the witnesses that did not easily lend themselves to a resultant consensus. The effort to determine what Jesus said and what Jesus did upon the occasion of the Last Supper resulted in an all-round scepticism, or at least hesitation on our part as to what He is believed by the Church to have said or done. From the standpoint of ecclesiastical order we might almost have concluded that He said and did nothing ; what He actually said and did was perhaps subject to an initial misunderstanding on the part of the disciples, who thought that when He spoke of drinking the elixir of immortality, He was referring, not to the *Soma* of the Indo-Iranian tradition, but to His own body, and that He actually said in Greek the equivalent of *Hoc est corpus meum*, about which words there has been such a legacy of further strife. It would certainly simplify our creeds and practices if we could be sure that Jesus never established a Sacrament at all, and would fit in very well with the other opinion, to which evidence is more and more inclining, that he never founded a Church.

Now this may, very possibly, be all wrong. The evidence for actual words spoken and deeds done may be much stronger than we had supposed ; and even if the analysis be correct and the final conjecture justified, we should still have before us, as an unsolved problem, the origin of the Eucharist, over and above the possible outcome of a supposed misunderstanding. Granting that the evidence for the foundation of Eucharistic practice is later than is commonly thought, and less than would be commonly wished, we have still to ask for an origin for the practices which certainly prevailed at a very early date amongst Christian people. If the Lord did not tell His disciples to remember Him in such and such a way, from what quarter did the instructions come for practices which actually prevailed ? To this question there are commonly two answers given ; one is, from the *Passover of the Jews* ; the other, from the *Mysteries of the Gentiles*. Of these two, the first is a comparatively easy and attractive solution ; find out from the Jewish prayer-book and the Jewish Talmud all that you can about their Passover ritual, and translate as much of it as possible into the corresponding Christian practices. If the occasion of the actual Passover does not make a sufficient parallel, try the day before the Passover, and be sure to say that the cups of wine which the Jews may drink at such a time are the same as those of a Christian

Agapē.¹ Unfortunately this method of procedure is vitiated by the underlying assumption that the Passover ritual is fixed, when the Christian ritual is obviously fluctuating, and that the Christian ignorance as to Eucharistic origin can be relieved by the Jewish certainty as to Paschal origins. Unfortunately also for this method, it turns out, upon examination, that the Jews know almost as little, with regard to the detail and meaning of their rites, as the Christians on their side; and where they have knowledge, it has to be harmonised with the law of evolution, which requires that even conservative religions shall change in the course of time more than they think they do, and more than they would like to admit. There is no '*quod semper*, etc.' for Judaism any more than there is for the daughter religion. If the daughter grows up, the mother grows old, and both are marked inevitably by the facial lines of change. So we must not expect too much from Jewish parallels, until we know more about the history of Judaism itself.

The other direction of enquiry is even more uncertain. Suppose we say *Gentile Mysteries* are the key to Christian practices. Who knows clearly what is covered by the term? Is it the rites of Eleusis, with their teaching and promise of immortality? Does any one know yet, I mean as we want to know for the purpose before us, what really went on at Eleusis? Can we get a definite contribution for faith and practice from that nebulous quarter? And if Christians had made loans upon Eleusinian Mysteries, would not some one, either from Eleusis, or from Corinth, have recognised the reaction and brought the Mysteries out into the light of Christian day, and translated them into Christian terms? The same thing is true of the Bacchic Mysteries. We are all coming to a better appreciation of the mystical elements in the Bacchic teaching, and the ecstatic value of the Bacchic experience. Euripides has taught us much, and the interpreters of Euripides.

Suppose we now discard for the present the various attempts to explain the ill-known of Christianity by the less-known of Paganism, and try another method. Let us ask the question, What is the oldest, the most venerable of the existing Eucharists? That almost looks like asking What is the oldest religion? for all religions have some kind of Eucharist involved in them; some magic for fertility desired, some

¹ It is commonly assumed that every Jew drank four cups of wine at the Passover, and that every Christian, at least in St. Paul's time, did the same at the Christian Easter.

thanksgiving for harvests conceded, and the like, including some criterion of expectations for a life to come. From the point of view suggested, we can at once affirm that for the student of religion there is nothing comparable for antiquity with the Egyptian rituals and worships. So that it might be affirmed *a priori* that if any Mysteries ever exercised a commanding influence over either the Egyptians or their neighbours, it must be the age-long and venerable Mysteries of Isis and Osiris. Compared with these, for example, the supposed Bacchic Mysteries are relatively so late in time, that the Greeks themselves suspected an actual derivation of their cult from Egyptian ancestry. Unless, then, it can be maintained that in the first century of our era, the Bacchic Mysteries had outrun in public interest and in mystical attraction the Mysteries of Osiris, we should have to allow that it is far more likely that we should find traces of reaction from the Osirian rituals upon nascent Christianity, than that we should be able to affirm that Dionysos had been reborn and had come to church. For the Egyptian cult was a persistent and aggressive rival of Christianity long after the latter had secured its pre-eminence in the religious world. This does not mean that the Egyptian cults were stationary : even Egypt, the most conservative of peoples, was really subject to change. The Isis of the West, for example, is not the original goddess of the Nile. She is Osiris, as well as Isis ; she has pushed her consort on one side, much in the same way as the Christian Virgin Mary, who succeeded her, has relegated her Son to a subordinate position. Allowing, then, for such changes as naturally occur in a great world-religion, we say that there is no quarter from which we should more likely expect contributory creative influence upon Christianity than from Egypt. From this point of view we are going to make a rapid survey of the Osiris- and -Isis legends, especially considered as Eucharistic : but we must make a preliminary caution, necessary in the study of Egyptian origins, and almost as necessary in any other religion. Before entering upon the study, one must take a large dose of

Honi soit qui mal y pense.

The Egyptian religion having a very long history shows innumerable traces of savage origin ; by this we do not merely mean frankness in the description or representation of the human body or the sexual functions ; anyone who looks at a page of Egyptian hiero-

glyphics will see for himself that frankness is carried beyond the bounds of what we should consider decency ; the ordinary actions of life, the birth of children, etc., are all represented. That is very little : not much more than would be involved in a change of latitude. Egyptian history, however, and Egyptian religion are full of reminders of a savage and a bestial ancestry ; as, for example, to take the mildest of instances, there is cannibalism. At this point it will be well to cross oneself and say '*Honi Soit*' three times ; for the language of cannibalism is not confined to the Egyptian religion ; it has a counterpart in the Christian religion, and on the lips of most Christian worshippers, who talk of eating the flesh (that is, the raw flesh) and drinking the blood (that is, the warm blood) of the Son of Man, and who trace their practice and their language back to the Son of Man himself, who reproves the crudity of the conception. Every religion if traced backward to its source will show a similar brutal stratum, though it may be obscured by judicious editings and excisions. In the case of the Egyptians, their extreme conservatism exhibits the lower strata to view along with the higher ranges of ideas. We may say that the strata were tilted, so that instead of one stratum being over or under another, they stand erect and side by side. It would, however, be easy to show that where language or its equivalent pictorial representation became unduly offensive, the Egyptians themselves sometimes took pains to present their ancient thought more delicately. For the present let it suffice to repeat, that for the study of ancient religions, Egyptian, Bacchic or Christian, the first necessity is to be able to recite *Honi soit* audibly or secretly. It should be in the preface to the Communion Office, if the traces of barbarism are still there : it should be a canticle in the Christian scriptures, to be repeated at various points of the Old and New Testaments, as a foreword to the lectionary. We shall use the formula at times in reading the story of Osiris and Isis. If we have occasion to describe, for instance, the way in which Osiris and his brother Set fought, or Horus avenged Osiris on Set, or Isis became the mother of Horus, etc., etc., there will be a good deal to glide over or to omit.

The legends, as is well-known, tell us of the rivalry between the good Osiris and his bad brother Set, who was a kind of pictorial hippopotamus, desiring no doubt to destroy the verdure of the crops which Osiris, as the risen Nile, had brought over Egypt. Set was

very crafty : he caught Osiris by a stratagem ; he had a coffin made to his brother's measure, and at a banquet persuaded Osiris to get into the coffin and see if it fitted him. Then, with the assistance of his boon companions, he put the lid on the coffin, soldered it down, and threw Osiris, mummy case and all, into the Nile. The coffin, or coffer, goes to sea, is washed up at Byblos on the Syrian coast, and embedded in the roots of a tree, which grows all round it with luxuriant branches that hide it from view. Isis, the wife and sister of Osiris, comes to Byblos in search of the body of her beloved, and flutters round it like a swallow, attracting the attention of the king and queen of Byblos, so that they cut down the tree to see what is wrong with it, extract the coffin, with which Isis returns to Egypt. She means to take it home and magically to bring it back to life. In this she had reckoned without her brother-in-law, who comes on the scene, finds the sacred body of the god, and tears it into fragments which he scatters all over Egypt. It will take some magic, now, to put the thing together again. Then we come to the second act of the Drama of the Quest, the Search for the Fragments. It takes much time and travel and travail, and makes many shrines as one piece after another is recovered and given honoured burial. Then Osiris withdraws his approximately complete form from this earthly scene ; he goes to the heaven of the gods, leaving his son Horus, whom Isis had magically secured from his dead body, to wreak the proper vengeance upon Set. That is one part of the story ; it results in the action of a Mystery play in every chief town of Egypt, where Osiris is first of all dismembered and lost, then resuscitated and found ; whereat the priests and the people unite joyously to sing and to say that '*Osiris is found*,' just as in the Christian Easter, if we may use the illustration, the Greek Christians of to-day meet one another with the salutation that *Christ is risen* (Χριστὸς ἀνέστη).

The next side of the quest for the lost Osiris takes us more closely into the interpretation of the god in terms of natural phenomena. In Egypt there are no rain-charms, by which to promote fertility and to secure harvests. The Nile, earthly and heavenly, is their sky-god, with whom Osiris is actually identified. The dying Osiris (he did not die so as not to be able to rise again) is the falling Nile ; the rising god is Hapi ; the returning Nile. You had the dying and rising god of which the ancients talked so much before your own doors.

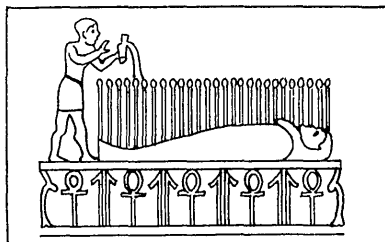
You almost died with him (as the waters subsided) and with him you annually rose again and revived when the great River returned. They were not quite sure where he came from, when he returned ; but it was a necessary part of the ritual that he should return, and for that they prayed and watched and waited. If they did not know the secret place of his withdrawal and hiding, they knew where he would manifest himself at his return. It was at the First Cataract of the Nile, where, as late as Herodotus' time, they supposed the source of the Nile to be, at the town of Assuan, and close to the island of Elephantinē. Here, between two mountains, named Crophi and Mophi, were the chasms whence the Nile re-issued, the visible Nile being reinforced by its celestial counterpart, a heavenly Nile in the sky, the water of life which came down from above. Between two such mountains was the throne of Osiris, and it was said that the sacred stream of life came forth from the very loins of the god. In Christian language, no doubt borrowed ultimately from this very quarter, 'out of his belly flowed rivers of living water.' (John vii. 38. You can modify this passage of the Gospel, in public reading, and say 'out of his heart,' or 'out of him,' but it means the same thing.)

It was from the observation of this sacred Nile and its counterpart in heaven, that I was led to the discovery of the lost verse in the Fourth chapter of St. John's Gospel, where Jesus replies to the question of the woman, 'Whence hast thou that living water?' and says, 'My water comes down from heaven.' There is much more to be discovered of the Osirianism of the Fourth Gospel. We need not be the poorer, either intellectually or spiritually, for making the discovery.

Returning to our mysteries of Isis and Osiris, we see that Egypt supplied a much better parable and exposition of the Dying and Rising God, than Syria with its Adonis, or Asia Minor with its Attis, or Eleusis with its Persephone. It made very easy ritual, this yearly miracle of nature : and at the Cataract of the Nile, long after the Christian era, they kept especial memory of how Osiris died and rose again, and how his sisters, Isis and Nephthys, wept over him, and charmed him back to life. No better illustrations can be found for the fertility-and-harvest-god than Egypt furnishes. Here is the figure of what happens in nature, in Egyptian nature, that is (see diagram on next page).

It represents the dead Osiris on his bier, as you can still see him at

the temple of Philæ, just above the Cataract. Here is the grain growing actually out of his body, and being watered by a spirit of some kind from a double stream, supposed to be the tears of Isis and Nephthys.



Almost a speaking picture, for the Egyptians meant their engraved monuments to talk ; and if this particular dead Osiris could talk (not being really dead), what could he say except to point to the harvest that was springing from him and say,

This is my body.

The picture says it for him.¹

Those who did not live at the Cataract taught and learnt the same lesson in another way ; they laid out mattings, on which they traced the form of the dead god, and sprinkled the figure with grain, which they set sprouting, something like the way in which we were taught as children to sow mustard and cress on a strip of moistened flannel. But with the Egyptians the grain that sprouted was in the form of God, and we suspect that, at first, the Adonis gardens were also deiform. Thus God became bread before your very eyes ; it was a genuine miracle, a transubstantiation that everyone wanted to affirm and no one to deny. The Mysteries said the same thing as the matting. They said *Osiris is returned*, and proceeded symbolically to eat and drink Osiris, the living bread that came down from heaven and the living

¹ It may be asked whether they really talked of eating Osiris ; here is a passage which may assist the imagination of the reader and at the same time take its place in the next commentary upon the Fourth Gospel : it will be found in the Pyramid texts of King Pepi i. (see Budge, *Osiris*, ii. 341) :

‘Pepi hath not eaten the flesh of Osiris :
The gods say, He will die because of it.’

Cf. John vi. 53 : ‘Except ye eat the flesh and drink the blood of the Son of Man, ye have no life in you.’

water that came down from heaven. Osiris said to them, *This is my body*, and (*Honi soit once more*) *this is my water*. We thus arrive at the necessary result of our enquiry, that the *first and most ancient Eucharist is a bread and water Eucharist*, and this bread and this water must be presented to Osiris himself in grateful acknowledgment for the fruits of the earth which he has given. The actual ritual has been preserved for us in the Egyptian *Books of the Dead* and associated documents, where the pious Egyptian re-enacts in his own person the Mysteries that will at last make him one with Osiris, and an Osiris.

The closing rubric of the festival directs that two beautiful Egyptian girls, ticketed on their shoulders as Isis and Nephthys, shall approach the shrine of the god, bearing each of them a vase of water from the risen Nile, and each a cake made from the new harvest. With these they disappear into the sanctuary, and have the privilege of symbolically eating and drinking with the god and his representative priests. They will 'eat and drink and see God also.' There is reason to suspect that a third cake had been introduced into the sanctuary, broken into pieces, to symbolise the god himself. There are traces of this part of the ritual in the Jewish Passover, though the Jews themselves do not seem to be aware of it. Traces too in England, where Joseph of Arimathea is said to have brought the Holy Grail in a dual form, in the shape of a pair of cruets, still sculptured on monuments in Somersetshire churches. The meaning is that Isis was worshipped at Glastonbury before it became a great Christian sanctuary. Very little that is religious exists, except as it is built on something that preceded it.

Returning now to the Mysteries of Osiris, we can see at a glance what an extraordinary influence such an attractive and moving spectacle must have had ; for 4000 years the people had been accustomed to see the central truths of their religion presented in this way ; so much of the ritual was public and processional, that the story became familiar and passed into folk-lore all over Europe. It was, therefore, quite easy and natural for a Christian illustration and expansion to be given to the oracular statement that 'this is my body.' The Gospels, themselves, are in evidence, and especially the Fourth Gospel, that attempts were made to dress Christ in the robes of Osiris. The whole story of Lazarus is, as we have shown elsewhere, a transplanted Osirian

myth.¹ So is the famous sixth chapter in which Jesus talks of the living bread that came down from heaven. It could only be historical on the assumption that Jesus is dressing Himself as Osiris. The account gets its sacramental colour because of its Osirian origin, and not because Jesus anticipated His death or the fellowship and immortality that His disciples might find in it, or in the ritual that served as its illustration.

We have thus very briefly described what I have ventured to call the oldest known Eucharist, and to associate it with the Christian liturgies, to which it forms an appropriate background. It will, perhaps, be inferred that we were engaged in a propaganda for the disuse of Christian ceremonies. That was not my immediate object. We want to know the truth as to the origin of certain sacramental customs; we found that Egypt had been unduly neglected by the students of sacramental history, in spite of the researches of Budge, and the lucid studies of Frazer. As to the practices which may prevail in time to come in religious circles, we do not venture to predict, except to observe that there will always be persons by whom an existing custom will be more honoured in the observance than in the breach.

The following is a convenient summary of the foregoing pages:—

1. The evidence for the establishment of the Christian Eucharist is insufficient and contradictory.

2. Jesus, according to the Gospels, never said, 'Do this in remembrance of me.'

3. He did not say, 'This is my body' over a broken cake of bread; it is more likely that he said 'This is my elixir of immortality.'

4. Whatever is reported to have been said or done by Jesus at the Last Supper is a reflection from the Mysteries of Osiris.

5. The figure on p. 32 illustrating the Mysteries of the Dying and Rising God at the first cataract of the Nile, should be prefixed to the Communion Office, to explain the enigmatical *Hoc est corpus meum*. To which we may add:

6. THE EGYPTIAN PRIESTS ACTUALLY EXPLAINED THE NAME OF THE RISING NILE AS *HOC EST CORPUS*.

Let us see if we can make the parallel between the Egyptian Nile

¹ See Woodbrooke Essays No. 5, *Jesus and Osiris*.

Festival and the Christian Easter Festival a little closer. We have been imagining the dead Osiris (who is not really dead, but undergoing a process of change) to speak and explain that the ripened grain above his bier is his body. Did the priests really use such language, when they conducted the ritual of Osiris? Here is an astonishing piece of evidence that they did. They speculated on the meaning of the name Hapi (Hap, Hapi, Hapu) which is the name of Osiris, as identified with the Nile; the meaning is actually lost in the mists of antiquity, but the priests made an etymology of their own. They divided the word and explained it as

Ha-pu,
'*This is the body.*'

It was bad philology, and Budge says of it¹ :—

‘the derivation proposed for it by the priests in the late dynastic period in no way helps us.’

If it does not help us linguistically, it is the greatest help in the direction of ritual. It shows us what the priests were likely to say of the recovered Osiris, and what they would make the god say when they spoke in his name. The formula ‘this is my body,’ which we imagined the image of the god to use, turns out to be the actual sacerdotal language. Our conjecture then is confirmed, and we are able to say that the

Hoc est corpus meum

is a direct transference and loan from the Egyptian religion. Either Jesus or his first followers have been in contact with the Mysteries of Osiris.

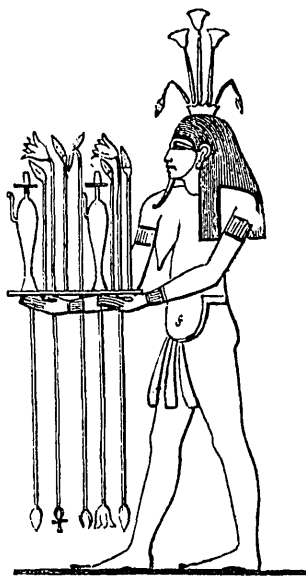
For the priestly etymology to which we have referred above, it will be convenient at this point to refer to Brugsch: *Religion, und Mythologie der älten Aegypter*, p. 638.

He tells us that ‘the name Hapi, given to the divinised Nile, is obscure, and that its later resolution into Ha-pu, *i.e.* *This is the body*, contributes little to the elucidation of its origin.’

Brugsch does more for us than recover a lost etymology of the Egyptian priests, who, like most priesthoods, were in the dark as to their own origins; he gives us suggestions from the ritual itself which they practised, to confirm the correctness of our foregoing analysis.

¹ *Gods of the Egyptians*, ii. 42.

Here is a picture borrowed from Brugsch :



HĀPI-NILUS.

You will see at a glance that the god is carrying on a tray vegetation symbols, in the form of papyrus and lotus plants, and two vases.

It will be remembered that at the close of the Osiris festival, two beautiful Egyptian maidens impersonate Isis and Nephthys, each carrying a vase of Nile water, and each a cake of bread from the new harvest. Evidently these two vases are the same as those which are represented in the tray of the god ; they are part of the ritual. The question at once arises, Why are there two vases ? We will see if we can answer that question or put the expert on the track of the answer. But just let us notice the persistence of the symbol of the two vases, and even their shape, thanks to Egyptian conservatism.

If we compare the figure of Hapi given above with the subjoined picture of the two Holy Grails which Joseph of Arimathea was said to have brought to Glastonbury, we shall be struck with the coincidence of the vases in the two representations, first, in number, and second, in shape.

Dr. Armitage Robinson, in his interesting little book *Two Glastonbury Legends*, has pointed out that the two vases, or as he calls them,

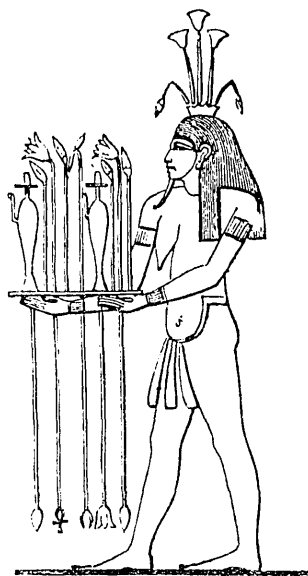
following the monastic chroniclers, cruets, are a part of the coat of arms assigned to Joseph of Arimathea in the parish church of St. John at Glastonbury. They are copied by him from the *Somerset Year Book* for 1924. He gives other interesting representations, especially one from the Manor House at Sharpham Park, near Glastonbury, in which the same representation occurs of a cross between two cruets. (See Plate.)



AT SHARPHAM MANOR.

Dr. Armitage Robinson suggests that the heraldic device of the cross between two cruets was first introduced by Richard Bere, the last Abbot of Glastonbury but one (1494-1524). The heraldry may be late, but the thing heralded is obviously much earlier. One might say, as in so many parallel themes, the later you make it, the earlier it is! St. Joseph, with his two cruets, represents a displacement by the

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Christian religion of a previously existing Egyptian cult. So we are set thinking in directions which we had not anticipated.¹

Now let us return to the two Egyptian cups carried by Hapi and his two lady acolytes. Budge's explanation of the duality of the vases is that they contain water from an ideally-divided Nile, the Nile of Upper Egypt, say from the Cataract at Assuan to Assiout, and the Nile of Lower Egypt, flowing from Assiout to the sea. No doubt the Egyptian rituals and hieroglyphs are constantly emphasising the union of the two halves of Egypt, and it is commonly explained that this union is symbolised by a lotus flower for Upper Egypt and a papyrus plant for the Delta. Accordingly Budge says (*Gods of the Egyptians*, ii. 43 ff.):

'As the Egyptians divided their country into two parts, the South and the North, so they divided the river, and thus there came into being the god of the Nile of the South and the god of the Nile of the North. . . . The god of the South Nile has upon his head a cluster of lotus plants, whilst he of the North Nile has a cluster of papyrus plants. . . . When the two forms of Hep or Hapi are indicated in a single figure, the god holds in his hands the two plants, papyrus and lotus, or two vases, from which he was believed to pour out the two Niles. . . .'

No doubt Budge is right in saying that the hieroglyphs lay great emphasis on the union of the two kingdoms, but it may be doubted if the explanation goes far enough into antiquity. If we examine the representation of Hapi, the Nile god, we shall see that he is regarded as androgynous; he is male and he is female. The feminine breasts are incontestable. So here we have another duality than the political, and one which must surely be primitive. It means that the Nile considered as the annual restorer of Egyptian life (you can see the *Ankh*

¹ For the representation of the coat of arms of Gentleman Joseph of Arimatea, I am indebted to Dr. Armitage Robinson and Dom Ethelbert Horne, of Downside Abbey, who supplied it to the Dean of Wells. Dom Ethelbert Horne has found a number of such representations in Somerset churches, of which I hope he will publish an account before long. The tradition which connects Glastonbury with the cult of Isis is evidently more widely diffused than we had imagined.

Observe that the two vases which Hapi, the Nile-god, carries are surmounted with crosses; and of course, there is the attached *ankh* symbol.

or Life-Symbol hanging from the tray which Hapi carries) involves a male and a female element. As such it conveyed the idea of two liquid components of which a general reference to the Egyptian literature will furnish illustrations.

Dr. Armitage Robinson has drawn attention to the Glastonbury tradition concerning the contents of the cruets. He translates from a prophecy of Melkin attached to Thomas of Malmesbury's *De Antiquitate*, and twice quoted by John of Glastonbury, the statement that the Arimathean cups contained the blood and the sweat of the Redeemer.

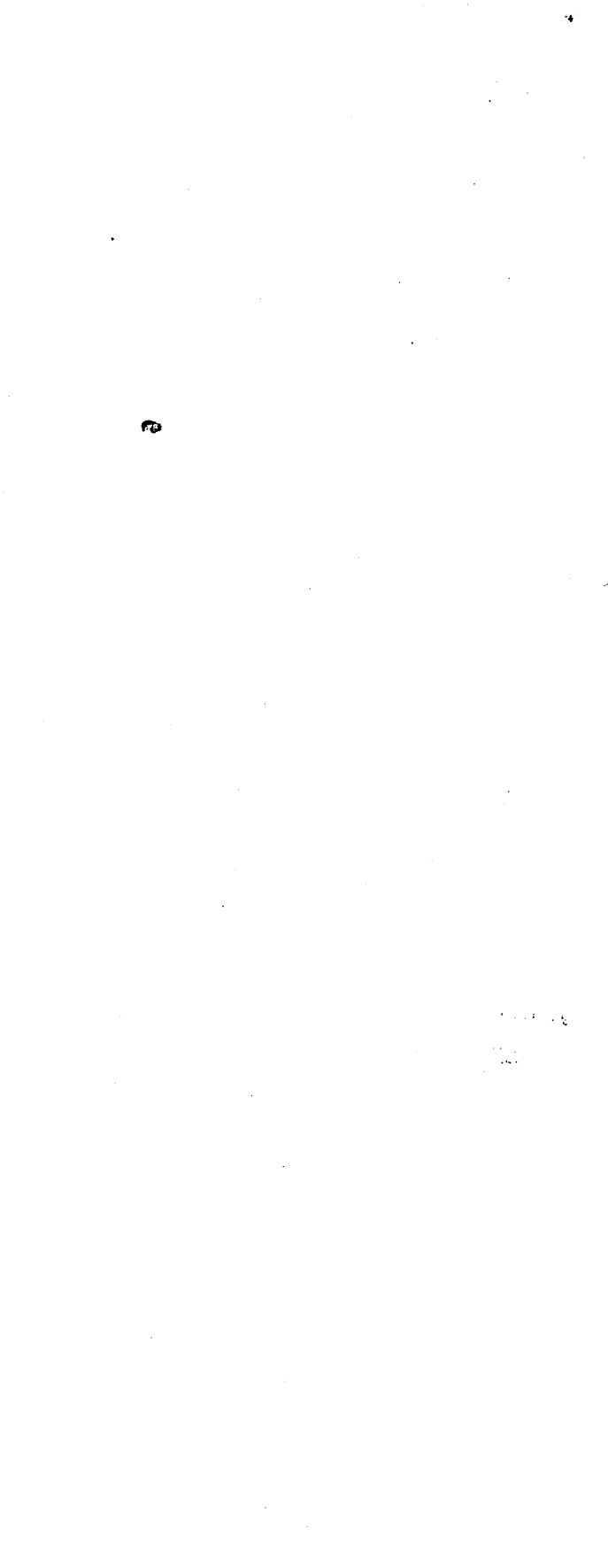
The Latin is as follows :

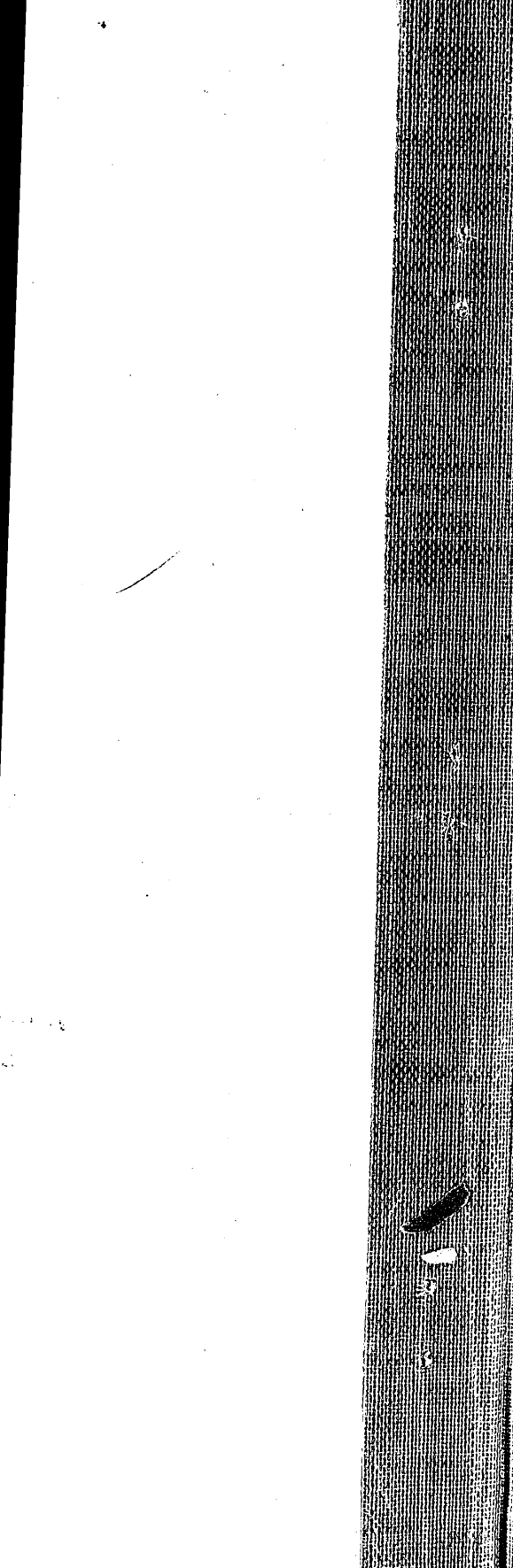
‘Habet enim secum Joseph in sarcophago duo fassula alba
et argentea, cruore prophetae Ihesu et sudore perimpleta,’

which Dr. Robinson has Englished from the metrical text of Melkin, the British bard, in the form :—

For Joseph hath with him
In his sarcophagus
Two cruets, white and silver,
Filled with blood and sweat
Of the Prophet Jesus.

What we have to notice is that the early monastic chroniclers had their own way of explaining the duality of the cruets; nor is it surprising that in the heraldic device which they traced for their patron saint, the field should be occupied with falling drops of blood, for was it not the evangelic tradition that Christ's sweat also was like great drops of blood? The cruets, then, were similar and their contents diverse, though it is natural to suspect that they will become at last, and in the due course of evolution, similar both in form and contents, in which case the duality will disappear, and we shall be left with a single cruet, the Holy Grail, and a single liquid, the supposed Blood of God.





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